1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

made by Persians in the Holy Cities. Rifles with Russian-made barrels were made in an old-established factory at Sulaymaniya and thence distributed over all Kurdistan. Tanning and leather-work were practised in the suburbs of Baghdad; but the products—shoes, belts, and saddles—were of low quality. The local river-craft, of primeval design, were fashioned crudely from imported wood and Euphrates bitumen, and use was made in lower 'Iraq of the lashed poles of the skin-supported *kelleks* which were drifted downstream from Mosul and Diyarbakr. Beds and baskets were made from the date frond, mats from the marsh reeds. These, with some soap-making and the Jewish industries of 'araq distillation and the fabrication of forged antiquities, complete the meagre list.

The 'Iraqi-Persian transit trade, a main economic factor, has been elsewhere mentioned (p. 13). To it as an 'invisible export' should be added the proceeds of the great Shi'i pilgrimages—life-blood of the Holy Cities—and those of Sunnis to the shrine of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Gaylani; and, with these, the money spent in 'Iraq by travellers and archaeologists, missions, and foreign consuls.

Apart from export and transit operations, the trade of the territory consisted of the import of those needed commodities which the country could not itself supply. The imports, except for some part brought overland from Syria, Najd, or Anatolia, all passed through Baṣra and were distributed from Baghdad, the unquestioned commercial capital. Cotton cloth, handled by Jewish and British firms, formed three-quarters of the whole. Most of this came from Manchester, a little from India, some silken and woollen goods from France and Austria. Coal reached 'Iraq from Wales, coffee from Brazil and the Yaman, gunny-bags and indigo from India, kerosene from the United States, sugar from Egypt, France, and Austria, wood and tea, yarns and spices from India, date-box wood from Austria, tobacco from Persia. Such, with lesser quantities of paper, hardware, zinc sheets, colours, candles, and fezes, were the imports which were distributed to the limits of the rural and urban population by way of merchant's warehouse, vaulted or mat-covered bazaar, village shop and wandering pedlar.

The currency of the three wilayas was that of the copper qirsh (piastre), the silver majidiya, and the gold lira of the time, a stable coinage adequate to all needs. The intrusion of the Indian rupee in Baṣra and of Persian coins in the middle Tigris towns and Kurdistan was of little inconvenience in an age of steady exchange rates, no restrictions, and no paper-money. A multitude of local weights and measures varied capriciously from district to district. Banking was represented by the Imperial Ottoman Bank, and by the shrewd operations of many local *ṣarrafs*.

St Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 MI Middle East
Iraq MH1

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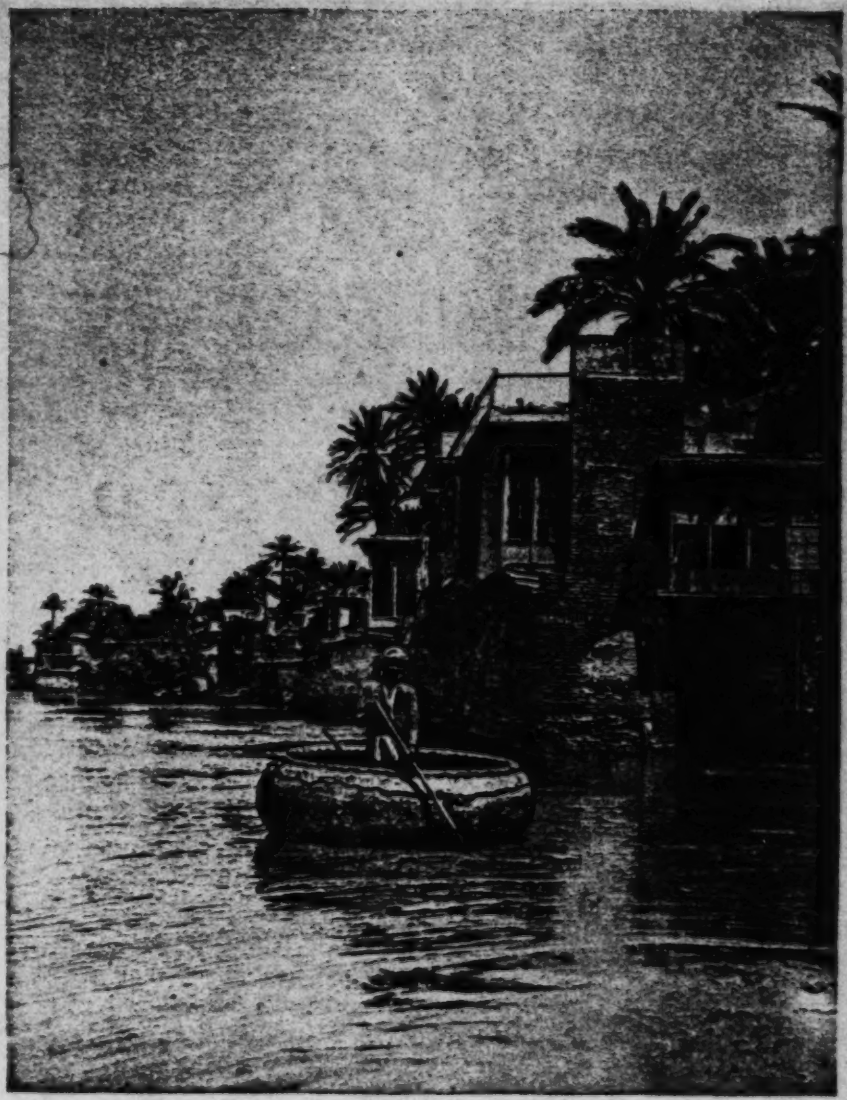

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A BOAT ON THE TIGRIS RIVER

facing page 106

5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Iraq MH1

[Marsh Arabs]

243 Bombay was. "No," he said, "here we make our bread
262 from rice flour. When the wheat crop is a failure, as in the past year, we have almost nothing else."

312 These overflow districts,* which are marshes in the spring when the rivers overflow, dry down to hard soil later in the year. To keep the water high for a few weeks longer than it would naturally remain so, temporary dams are constructed across some of the smaller streams, leaving an opening to allow boats to pass and water to run through. These dams persist in the face
[342] of a strong current in a way that is surprising. Mud, tree branches, mats, soil and the like seem to be the only building material, for there is no stone within hundreds of
[476] miles. The dams require a large amount of labor, and of course are coöperative enterprises. Possibly because of this necessity for coöperative effort, the Marsh Arab communities appear to have developed a good degree of community spirit.

361 Like their race everywhere, these Marsh Arabs do not live in isolated individual houses in the midst of their fields but collect in larger or smaller towns, some of them of considerable size. These towns are located usually in the fork of a river, or where several streams come together. In Lower Mesopotamia there are many small channels that carry water either ~~out~~ of the main
501 river or into it. The Marsh ~~Arabs~~ get about in picturesque, high-prowed, black river boats, black because they are covered with a thick coat of native bitumen which wells from the ground in one or two places in Mesopo-
[135] tamia and is an indication, so the engineers tell us, that petroleum is to be found in that country. These river boats, which are the one means of transportation, are built somewhat on the lines of a canoe and take consid-

*[along the last 100 miles of the Arab river from Gurna to the Gulf -- Analyst]

5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Iraq MH1

[Marsh Arabs]

501 erable skill to navigate. They are capable of great speed and are driven either by a sail or by oars as the occasion requires. To a stranger they seem very unstable, but the Marsh Arab, who has practically lived in them ever since he was a baby, finds them abundantly stable and perfectly safe.

342 From a distance the houses occupied by these people are very picturesque. The reeds that grow in great abundance in the marshes of Lower Mesopotamia are gathered and when dry are tied in great bundles perhaps two feet in diameter. They are ten to fifteen feet tall or even more, and two bundles tied together at the tops are bent over to form an arch. Each of these arches forms one of the ribs of the house. They are placed every four to six feet, giving an air of solidity and dignity to the structure that is most unusual for this sort of simple architecture. Over these ribs a mat roof is constructed which is surprisingly tight even in the heaviest rains. The houses vary in size, and the largest ones, which serve as guest halls for the sheikhs and the rich, may be seventy-five feet long and twenty feet broad.

423 This agricultural district is peculiar in that while it
621 has a settled community engaged in agricultural pursuits, there is no private ownership of land. The Marsh Arabs form a group almost untouched by Europeans. In the one district we visited all land is owned by the government, in this case a sheikh far removed from the district.
427 The only tax that he levies is a moderate rental for the
651] land. Apparently there is little difficulty in getting land;
425 at least no one complained of any trouble of that sort, nor does there seem to be any difficulty in keeping the same plot of land indefinitely if the cultivator wishes to do so.
000 The local governor is an efficient and more or less benevo-

5: Harrison D-4 (1913-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Iraq MH1

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BASRA CUSTOM HOUSES

faring p. 120

,21: Fisher S-4 (no date) 1950 M1 Middle East
Iraq MH

Kifri (on the edge of the Zagros foothills, south-east of Kirkuk), but annual production over the period 1940–45 averaged only 2,000 tons. Salt and gypsum are the only other minerals produced in any significant quantity.

Industry is on an equally restricted scale. There are small craft industries chiefly concerned with textiles, building, food processing, metal work, and tanning, but most products are of indifferent quality, and none but home markets are supplied. Textile products include rugs, carpets, and materials for Arab style of dress, using wool, cotton, silk, and a little mohair; and it is significant that the better quality carpets sold in Iraq are imported from Iran and Turkey.

A few modern factories and installations have come into existence during the past 20 years, but the number is exceedingly small. Brick and tile making machinery accounted for almost one-third of all modern plant, and three spinning and weaving mills (for wool only, none for cotton), three cotton ginning factories, and one rayon factory represent all the modern textile plant in the country.

Over 90 per cent. of Iraqi industry (craft and modern) is located in Baghdad, and the only other 'industrial' centre is Mosul, with a distillery and the rayon factory already alluded to. It will thus be clearly apparent that industry plays an exceedingly small part in the general life of the region—smaller, on average, than in most Middle Eastern countries, and considerably smaller than in the neighbouring region of the Levant.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS

Unlike Iran, where mountain ranges and deserts have proved severe obstacles to movement, the riverine lowlands stand out as a region of easy access. On either side of the two rivers the undulating plains are not entirely without water and vegetation, and have for many centuries furnished a variety of easy routes from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean. Though in the lower valley routes must avoid the lakes and marshland, keeping to the steppes on either side, the rivers themselves are navigable for hundreds of miles, even though with some difficulty at certain seasons of the year. Here is a considerable contrast with Iran, where a short stretch of the Karun river below Ahwaz is the only navigable waterway in the country.

In the upper parts of both the Euphrates and Tigris and their larger tributaries, a special form of water transport has for long been a

21: Fisher S-4 (no date) 1950 M1 Middle East
Dup MH1

501 feature. This is by *kelek*—a raft made of brushwood and small pieces of timber, supported by inflated animal skins. The usual number of skins in one raft is 50 to 100, but keleks of 250 skins are known, and these can carry loads of 50 tons. These rafts are almost unsinkable, and carry timber, hides, and charcoal from the forests of Asia Minor to the practically treeless lowland region. Because of the numerous rapids and gorges on the headstreams of the rivers, transport by any other craft is impossible. An extra hazard to a journey by kelek is the possibility of attack by Kurds, who for centuries have been accustomed to take toll of river traffic by wrecking occasional keleks and appropriating the cargo.

Because of the swiftness of the current, upstream navigation is not possible, and on arrival at their downstream terminus the kelek is broken up; the brushwood sold, and the timber framework and deflated skins carried by pack animal back to the starting point, where they are used again to construct another kelek.

Further downstream where the waters are quieter, numerous types of boat are found, ranging from *mashufs*—small canoes for use in the marshes—to sailing craft large enough to carry 40 to 70 tons of cargo. Below Baghdad there are river steamers that tow barges between the capital and Basra; but these are small, since the Tigris has no more than 4 feet of water in winter, and only 3 feet in summer. Navigation on the Euphrates is less easy, since the average depth of water in the regions of Hindiya and Lake Hammar is only 2 feet 6 inches, and motor launches or small sailing craft replace the steamers of the Tigris.

000 Besides the waterways, which carry the greatest traffic, railways and roads must be considered. The first railway to be laid was a short section between Baghdad and Samarra, built by German engineers as part of the projected Berlin-Baghdad system. This was of standard gauge. During the war of 1914, the British laid a number of lines, of metre and 2 feet 6 inches gauge, using material and stock from India. The disposition of the lines was governed by immediate strategic and economic considerations, so considerable alteration became necessary when the war ended. The 2 feet 6 inches lines were relaid to a metre gauge, but there are still two gauges in use—standard and metre, with the break at Baghdad. Metre gauge lines connect Baghdad and Basra via Hilla, Samarra, Nasiriya, and the Euphrates valley; and another branch runs from Baghdad to Kirkuk and Khanaqin. The former line was routed via the Euphrates partly because of the denser